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Fujimori

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(54) **SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE HAVING
MAGNETIC SHIELD LAYER SURROUNDING
MRAM CHIP**

USPC 257/421–427, E29.323; 438/3;
360/324–326; 365/157–158, 171–173
See application file for complete search history.

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Inventor: Kenji Noma.

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H01L 43/02 (2006.01)

H01L 43/08 (2006.01)

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **H01L 43/02** (2013.01); **H01L 27/222**
(2013.01); **H01L 43/08** (2013.01)

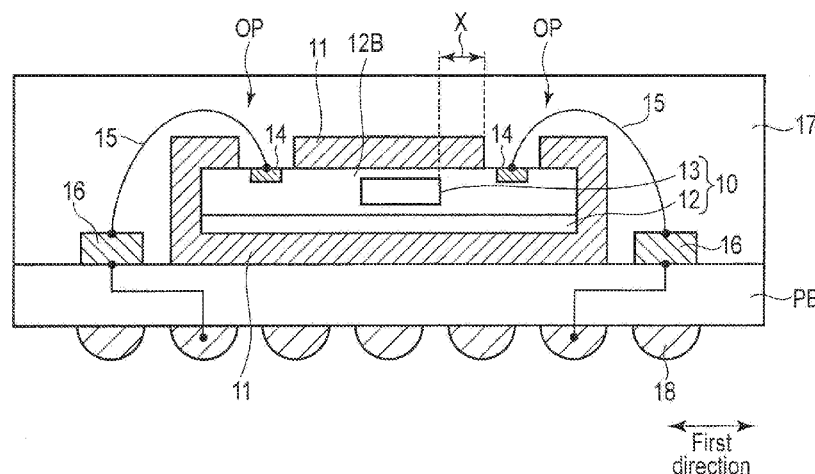
(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC H01L 43/08; H01L 43/065; H01L 27/22;
G11C 11/16

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A semiconductor device includes a MRAM chip including a
semiconductor substrate and a memory cell array area
includes magnetoresistive elements which are provided on
the semiconductor substrate, and a magnetic shield layer sur-
rounding the memory cell array area in a circumferential
direction of the MRAM chip, and having a closed magnetic
path.

17 Claims, 20 Drawing Sheets



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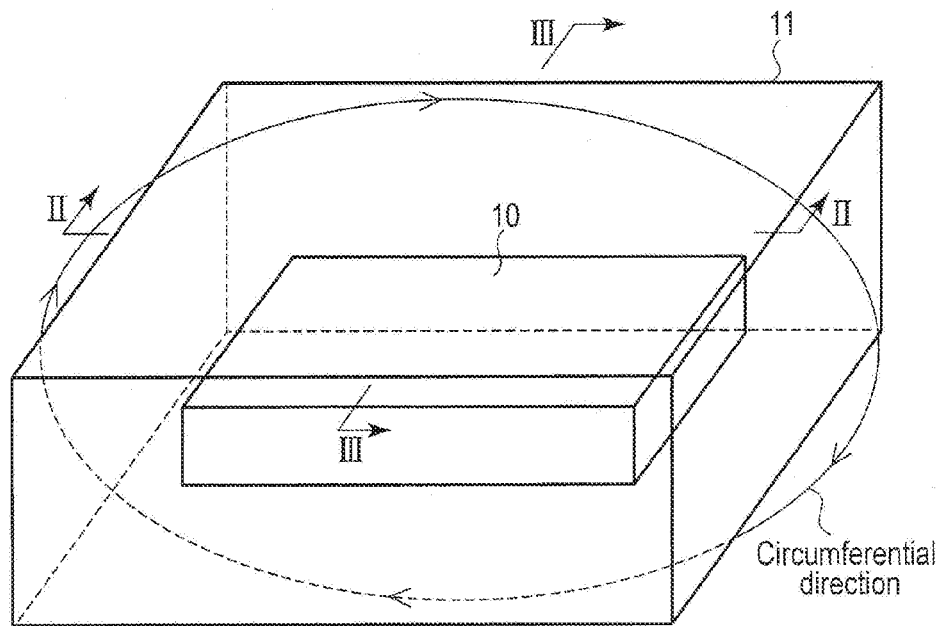


FIG. 1

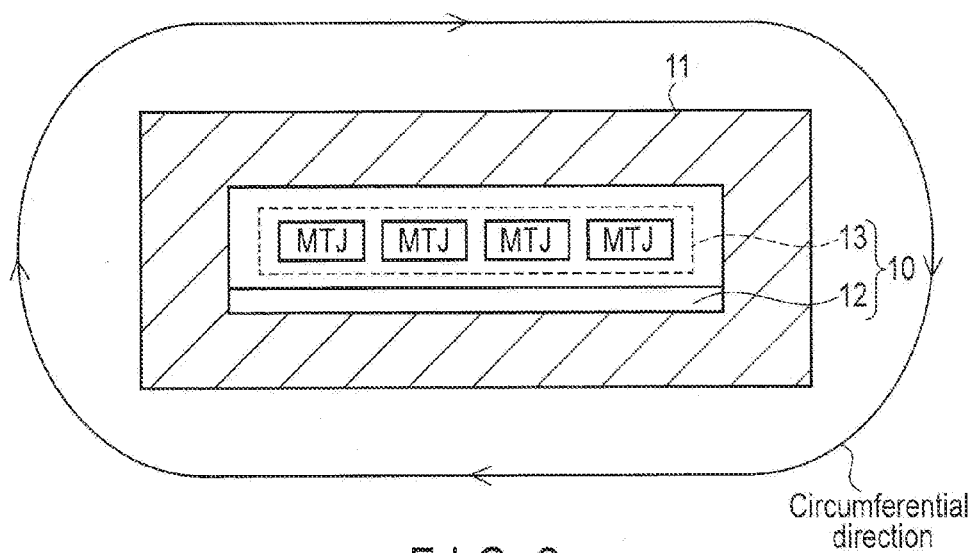
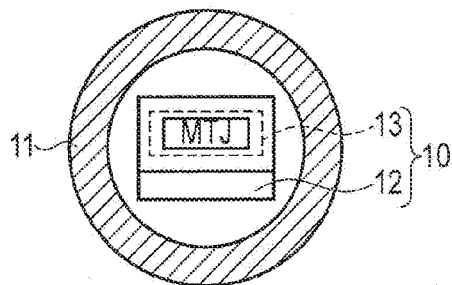
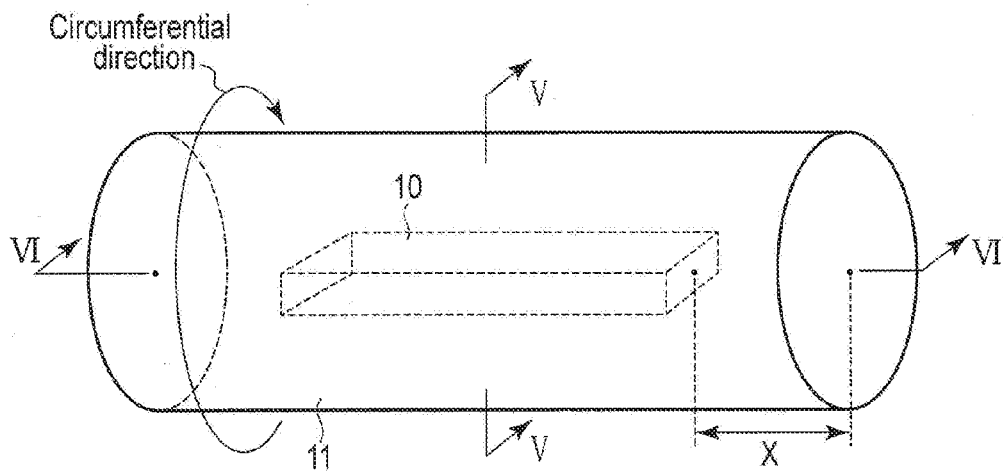
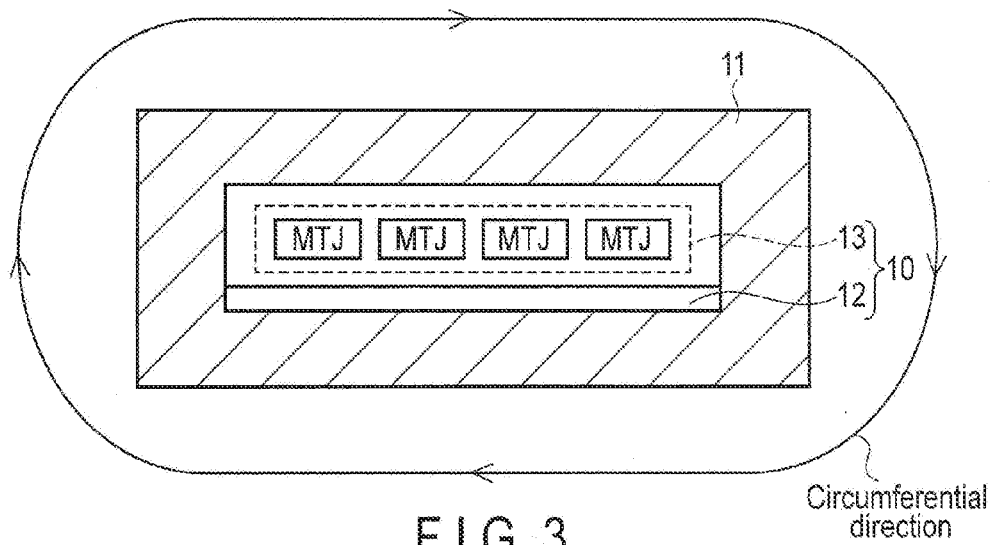


FIG. 2



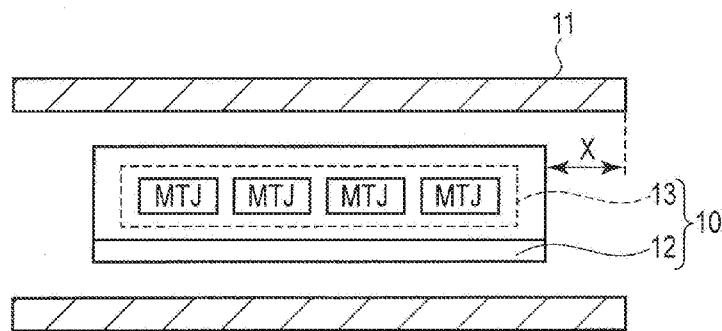


FIG. 6

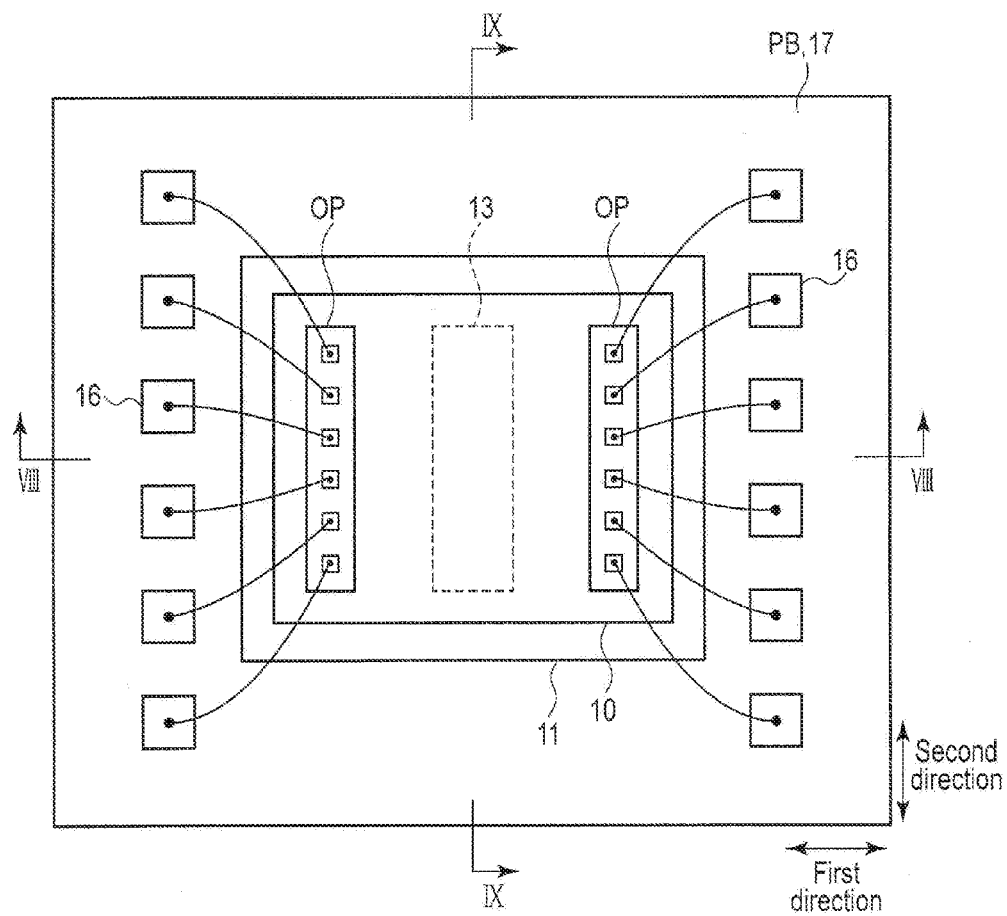
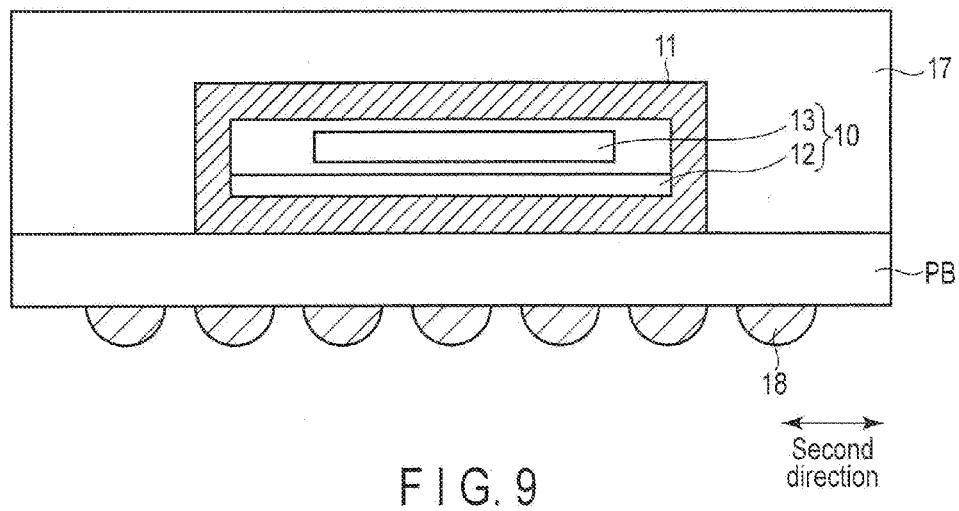
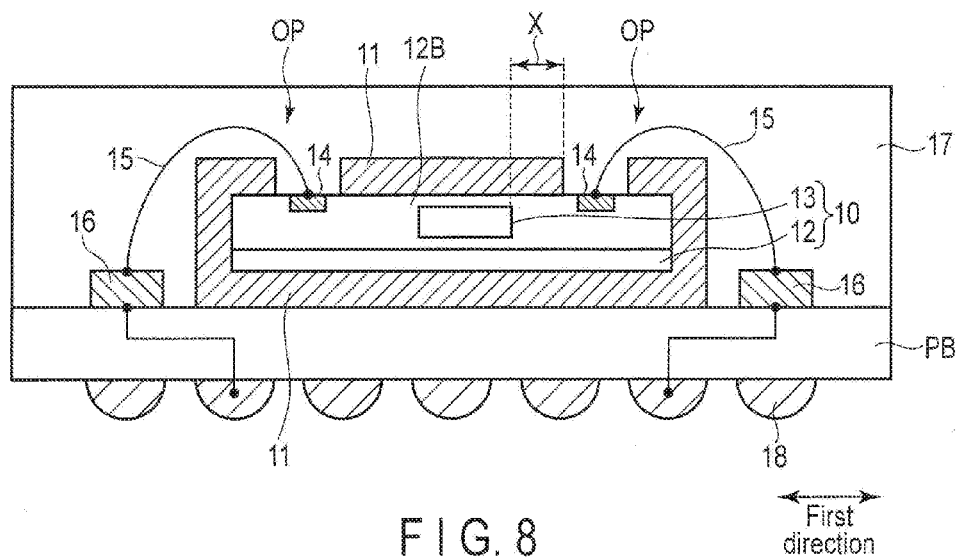


FIG. 7



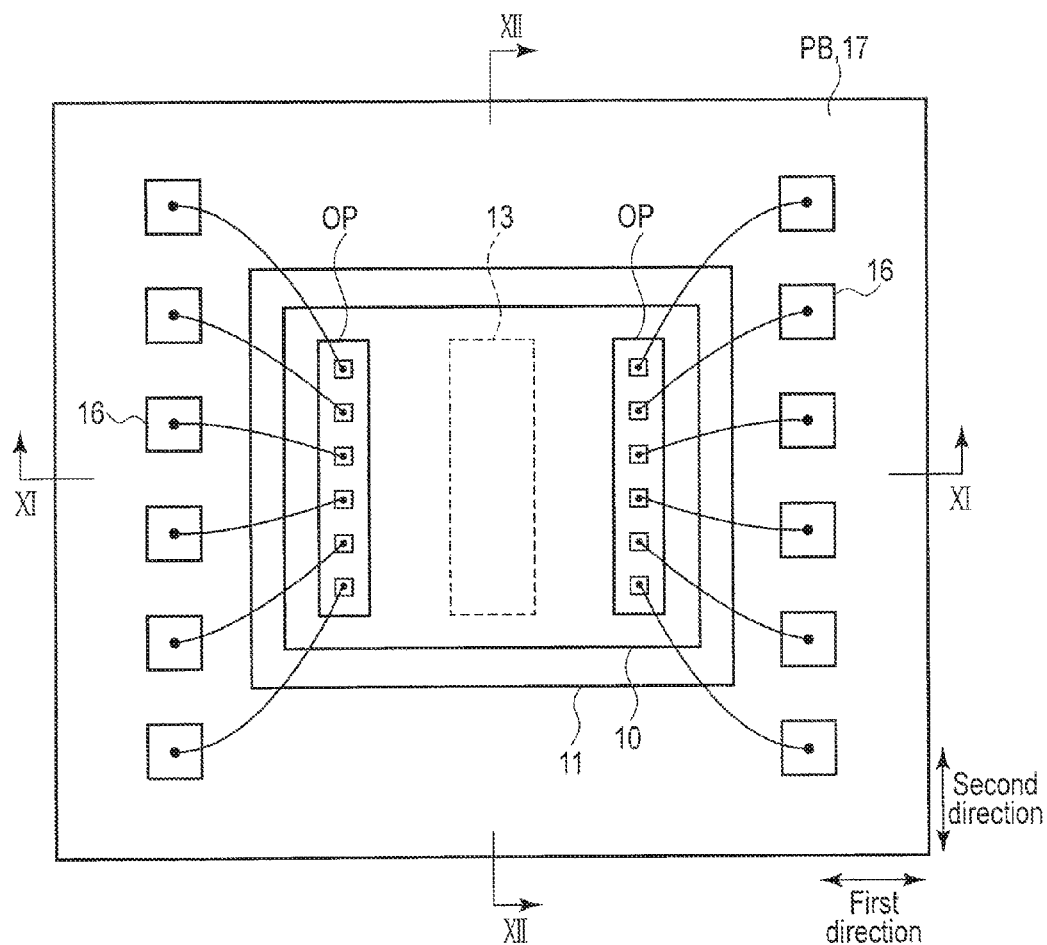
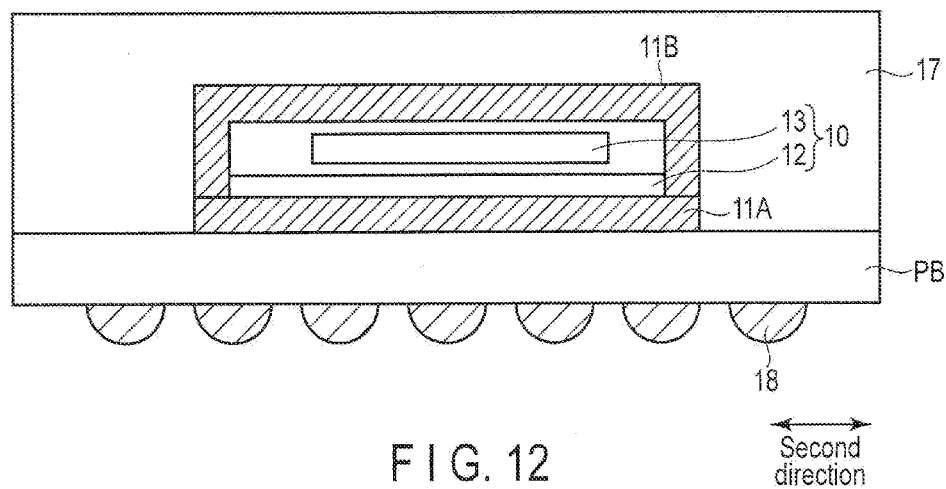
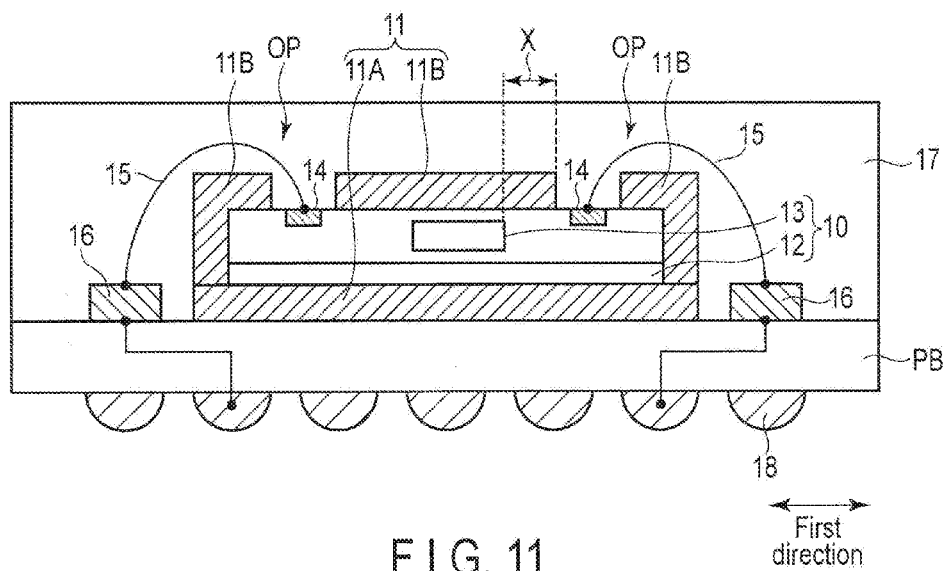


FIG. 10



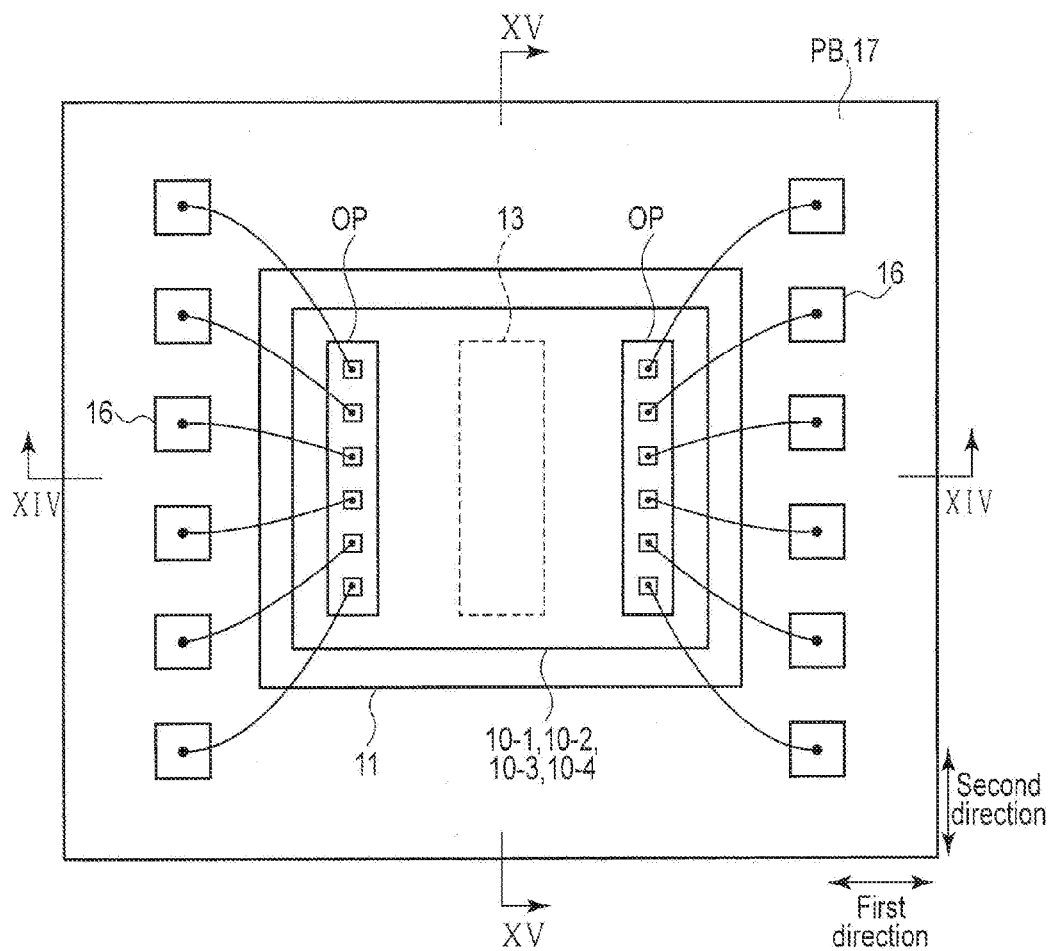


FIG. 13

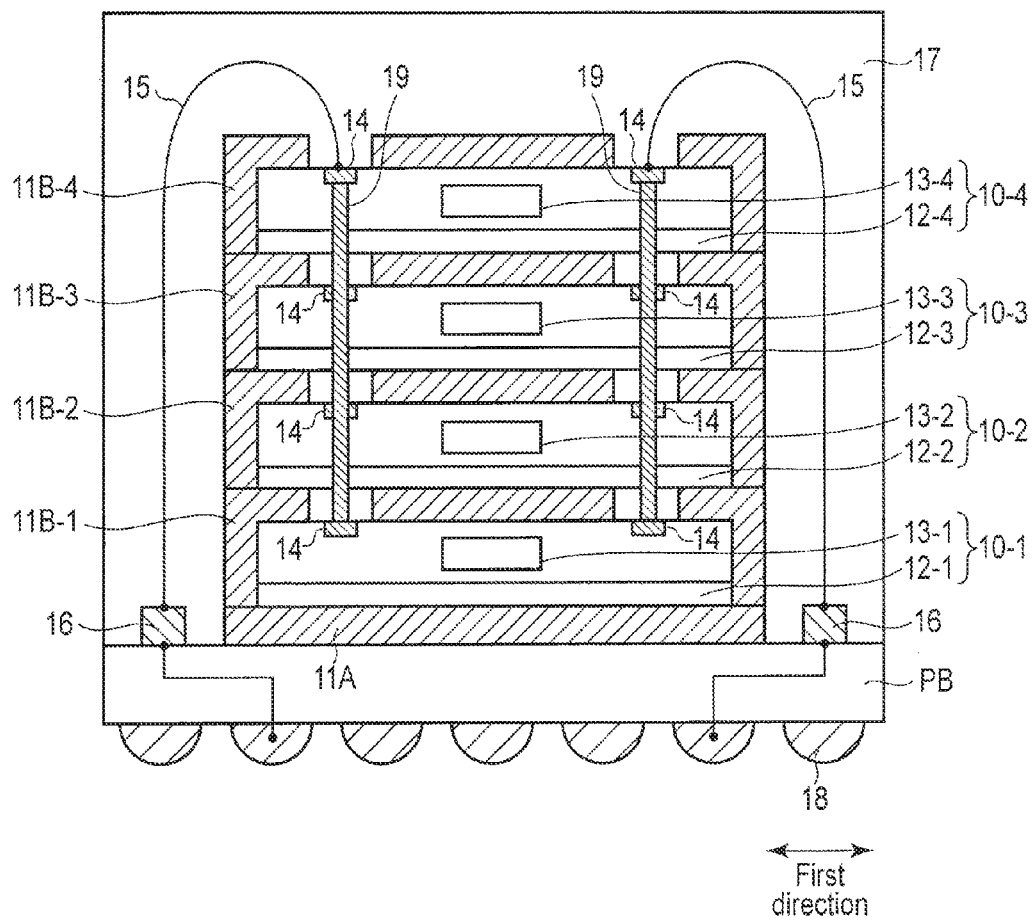


FIG. 14

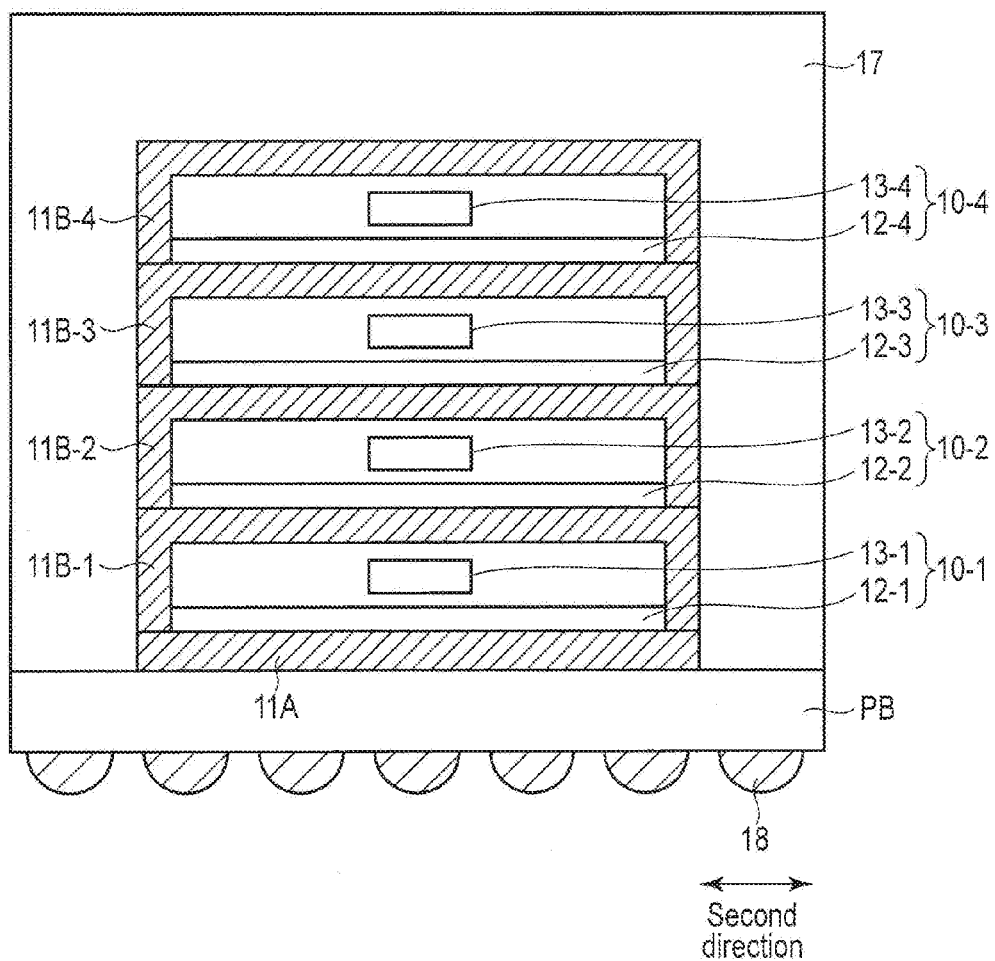


FIG. 15

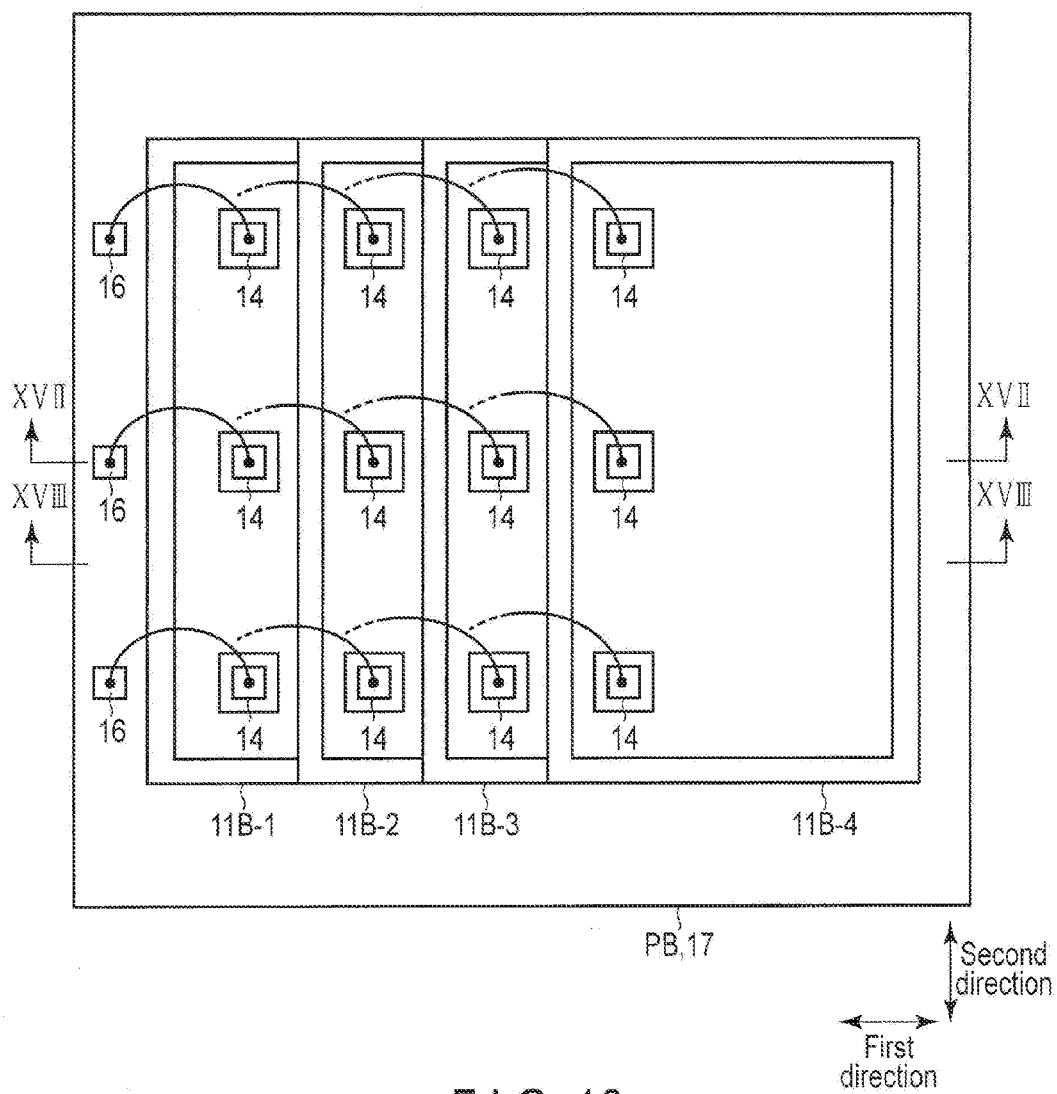


FIG. 16

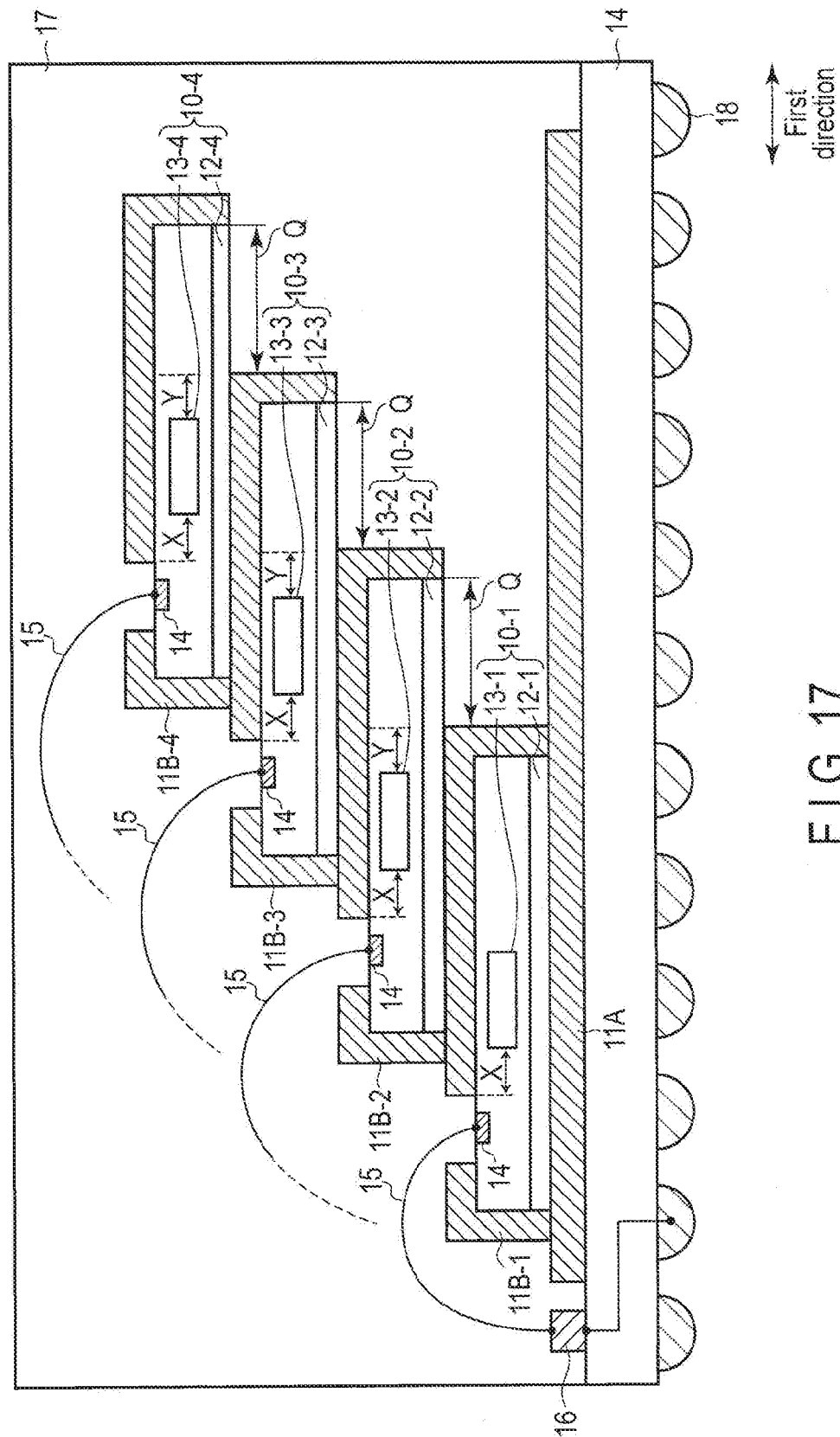


FIG. 17

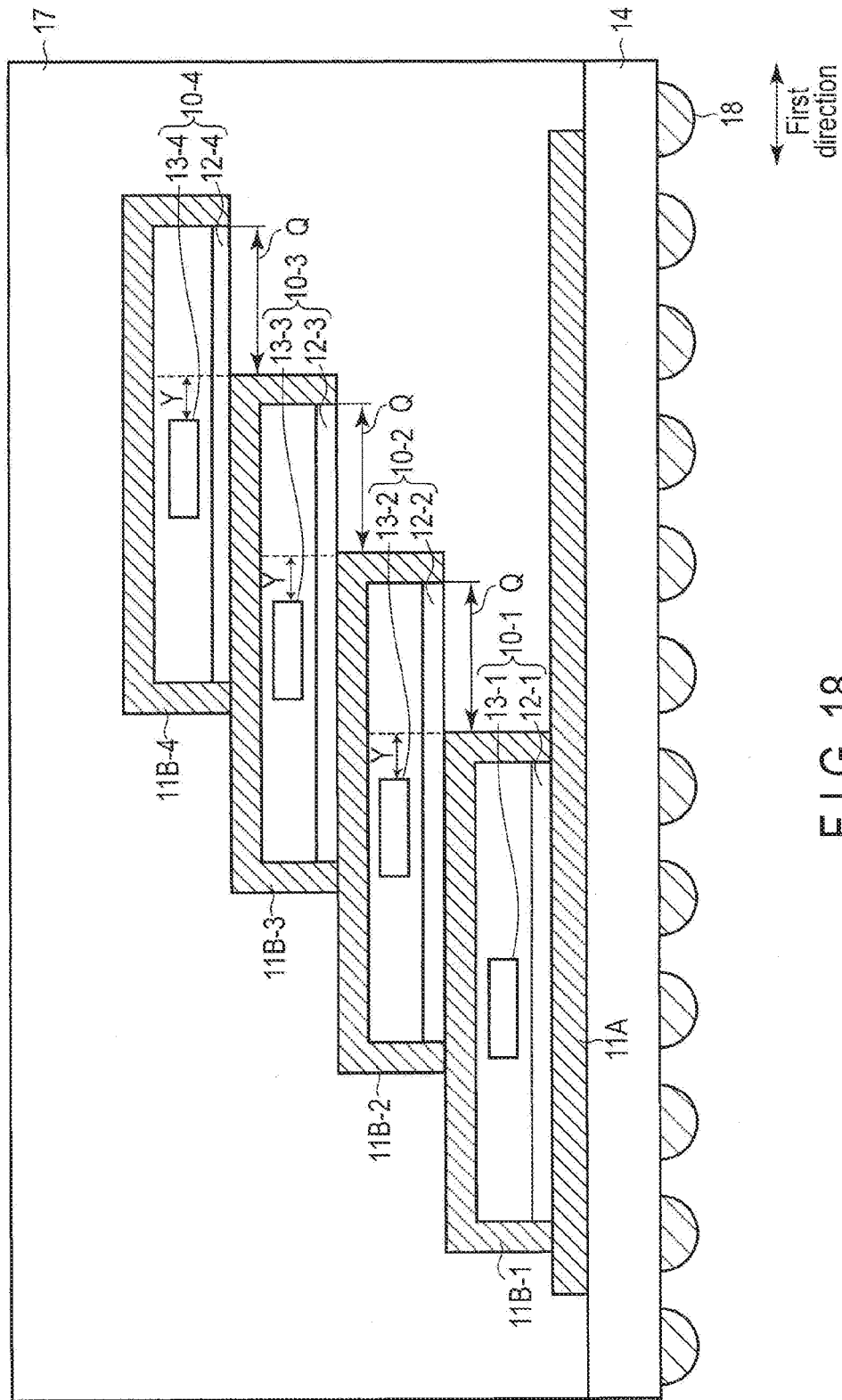


FIG. 18

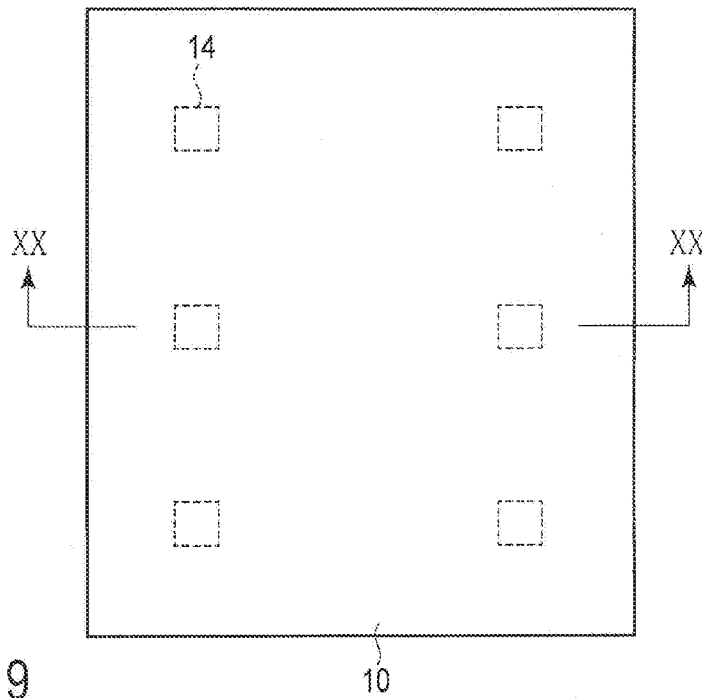


FIG. 19

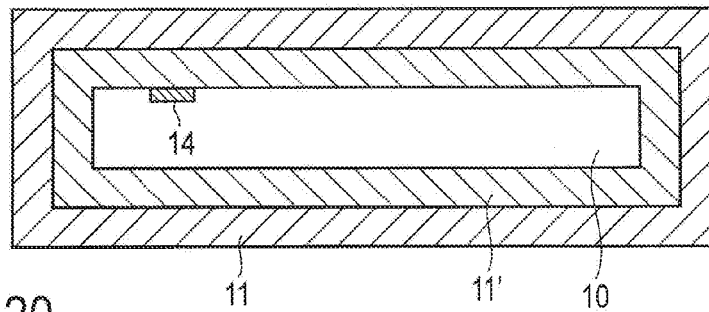


FIG. 20

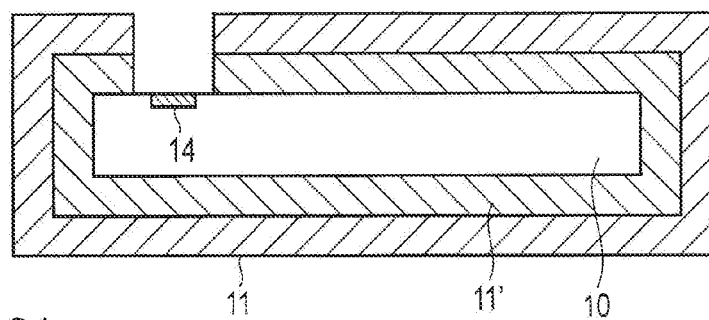


FIG. 21

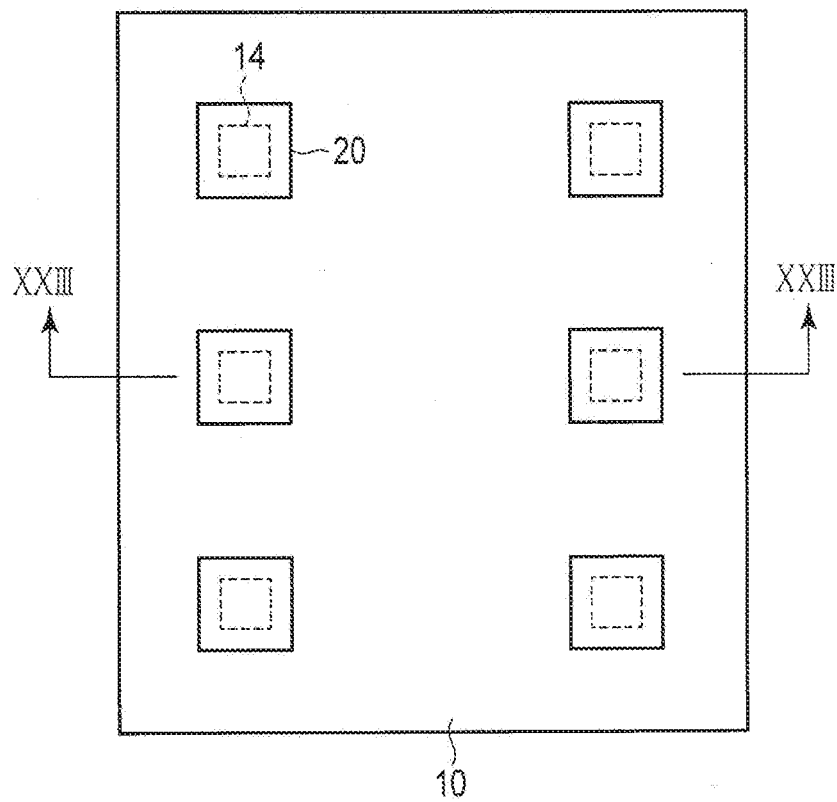


FIG. 22

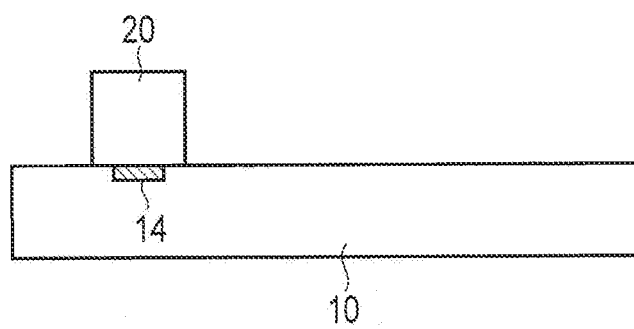


FIG. 23

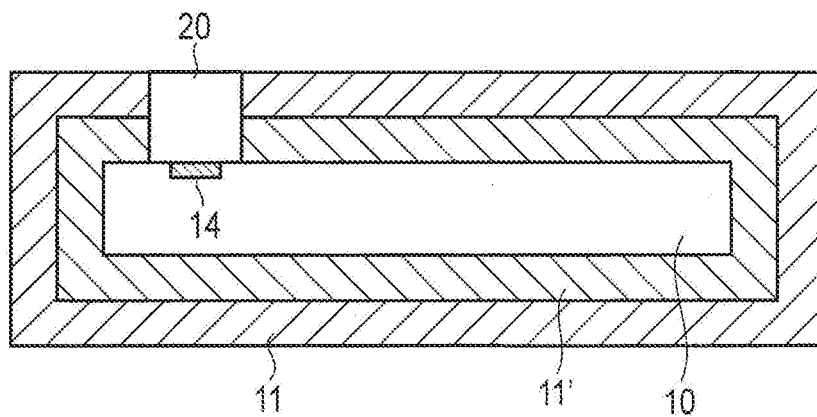


FIG. 24

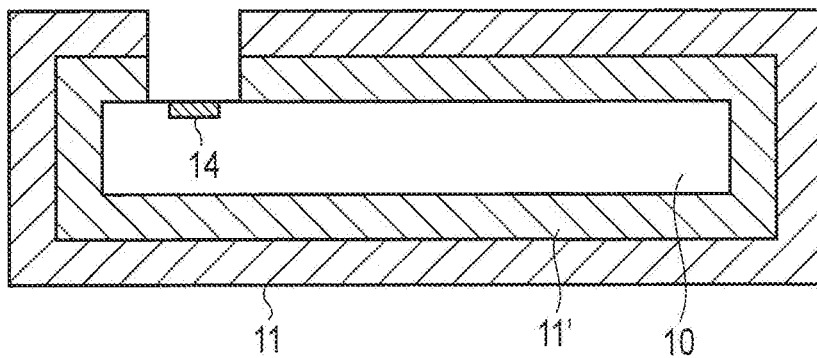


FIG. 25

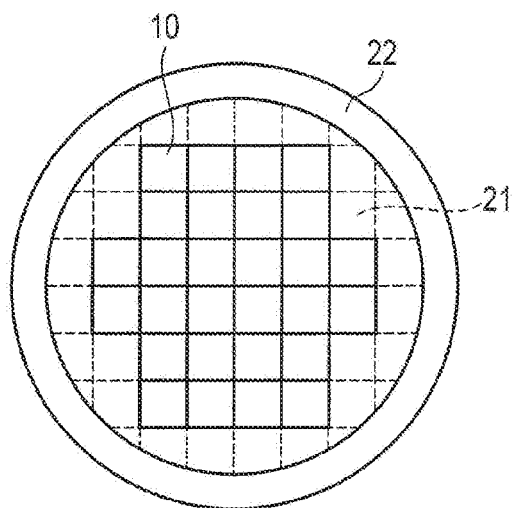


FIG. 26

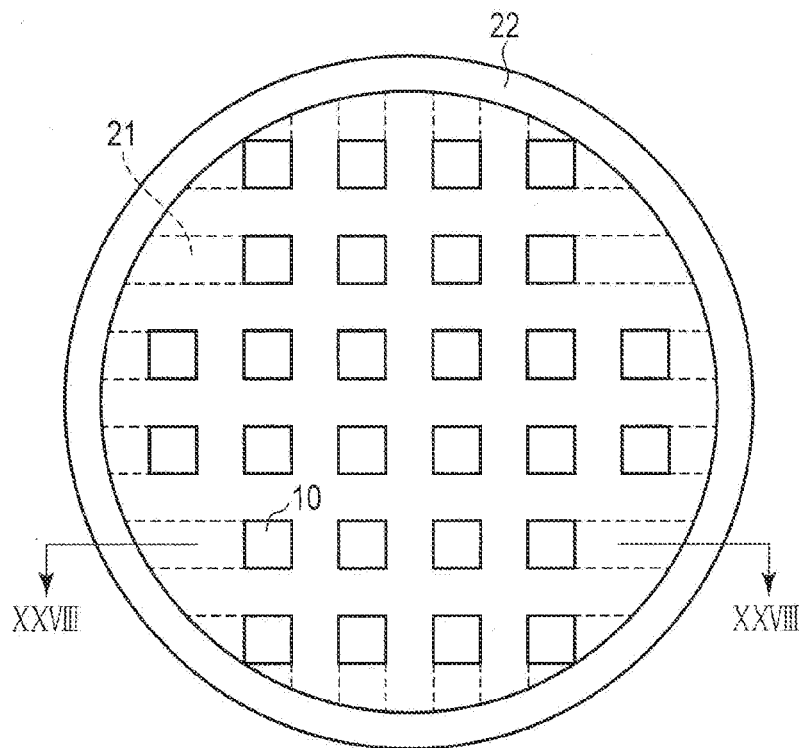


FIG. 27

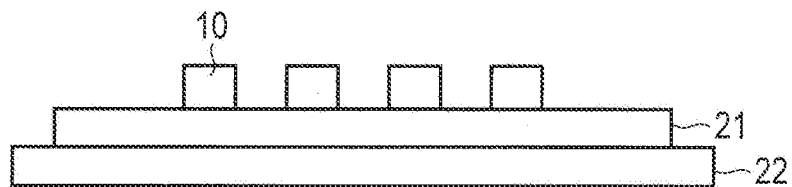


FIG. 28

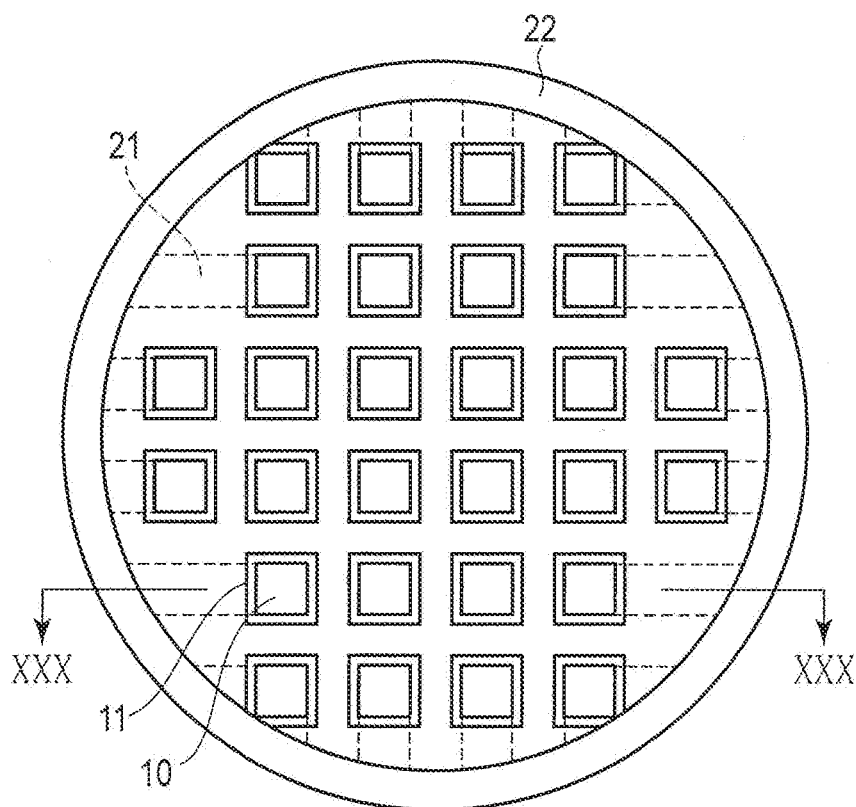


FIG. 29

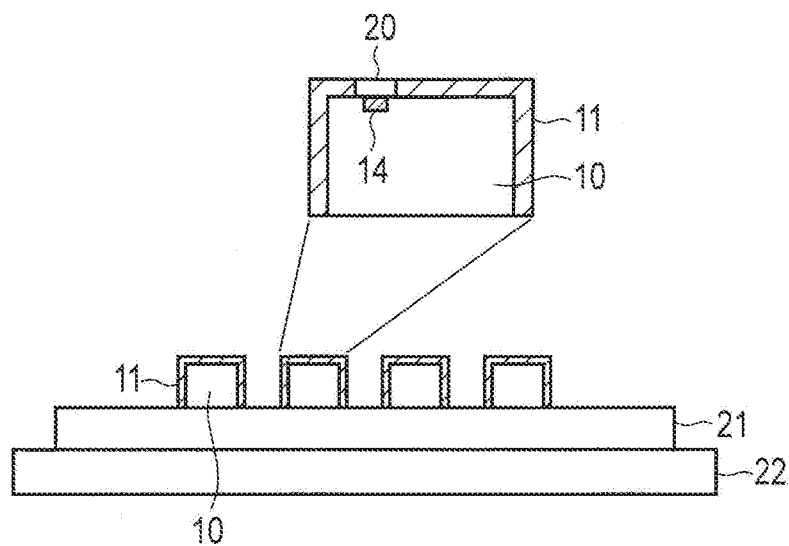


FIG. 30

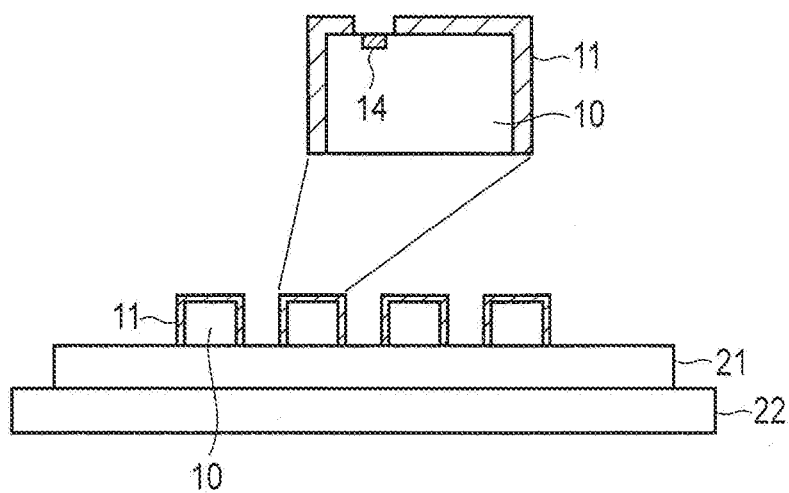


FIG. 31

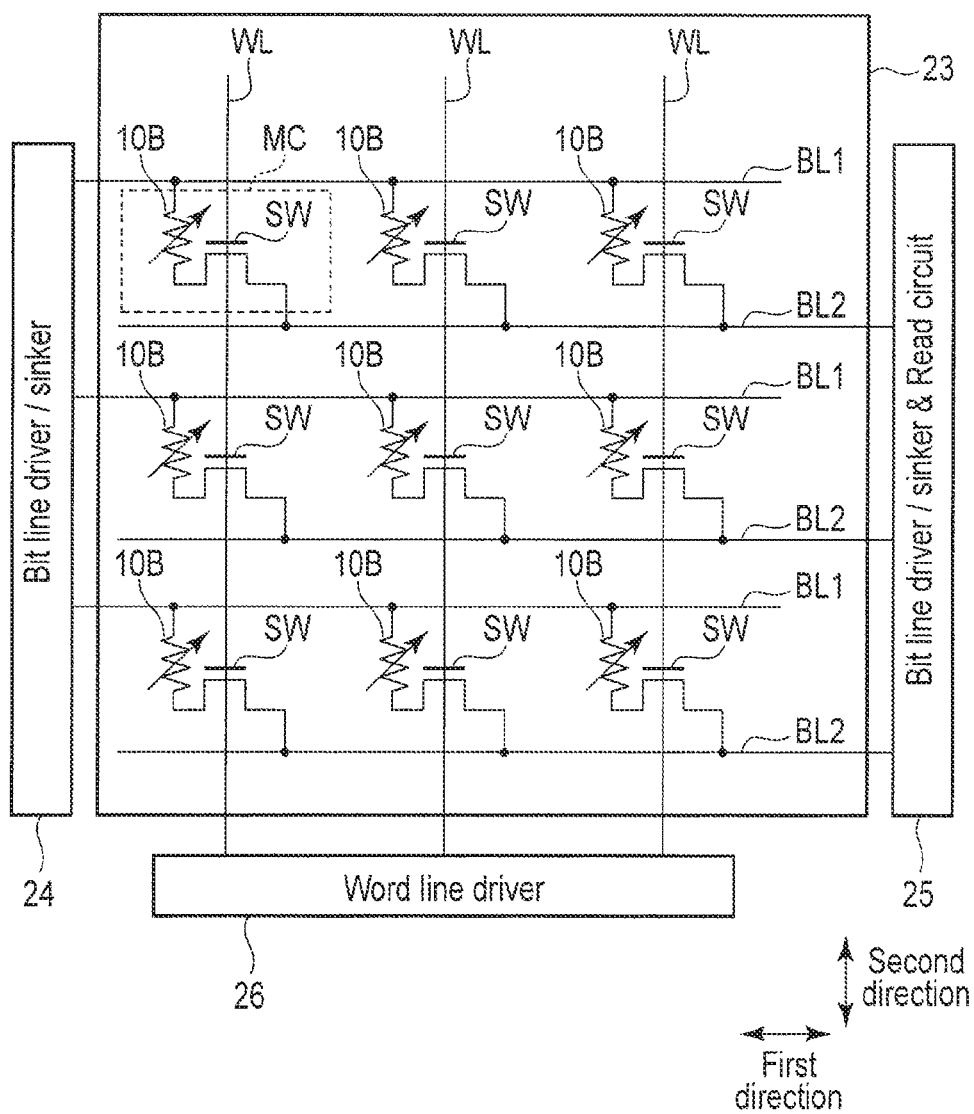


FIG. 32

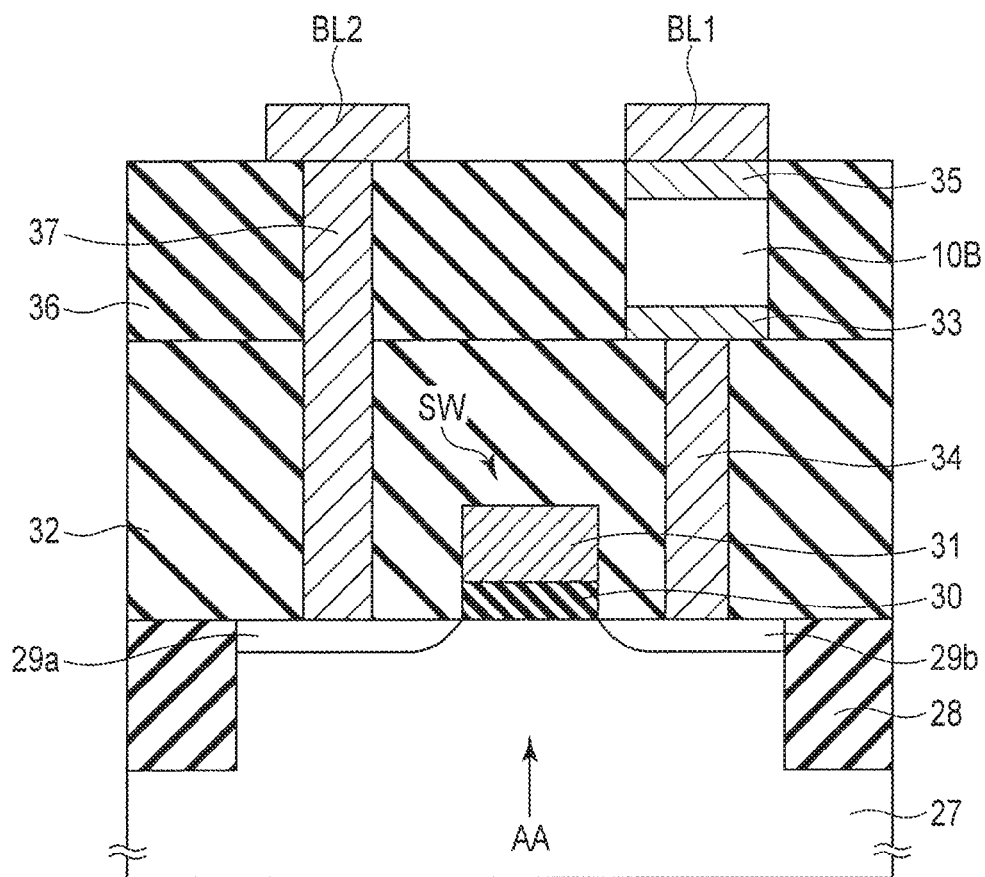


FIG. 33

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SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICE HAVING MAGNETIC SHIELD LAYER SURROUNDING MRAM CHIP

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a Continuation application of U.S. Ser. No. 14/140,393, filed Dec. 24, 2013, which is based upon and claims the benefit of priority from Japanese Patent Application No. 2013-197033, filed Sep. 24, 2013, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD

Embodiments described herein relate generally to a semiconductor device and a method of manufacturing the same.

BACKGROUND

A magnetic random access memory (MRAM) chip used as a nonvolatile semiconductor memory device controls operations, such as writing, reading and data storage, utilizing magnetization of a magnetoresistive element. Accordingly, if the magnetization of the magnetoresistive element is influenced by an external magnetic field passing through the MRAM chip, the operations may well vary. In view of this, it is desirable to block the external magnetic field using a magnetic shield layer so that the external magnetic field does not enter the MRAM chip.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing a first embodiment; 35
FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along line II-II of FIG. 1;
FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along line III-III of FIG. 1;
FIG. 4 is a perspective view showing a second embodiment; 40
FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken along line V-V of FIG. 4;
FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along line VI-VI of FIG. 4;
FIG. 7 is a plan view of a third embodiment;
FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view taken along line VIII-VIII of FIG. 7;
FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view taken along line IX-IX of FIG. 7;
FIG. 10 is a plan view of a fourth embodiment; 45
FIG. 11 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XI-XI of FIG. 10;
FIG. 12 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XII-XII of FIG. 10;
FIG. 13 is a plan view of a fifth embodiment;
FIG. 14 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XIV-XIV of FIG. 13;
FIG. 15 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XV-XV of FIG. 13;
FIG. 16 is a plan view of a sixth embodiment;
FIG. 17 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XVII-XVII of FIG. 16;
FIG. 18 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XVIII-XVIII of FIG. 16;
FIG. 19 is a plan view of a first example of a manufacturing method;

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FIG. 20 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XX-XX of FIG. 19;

FIG. 21 is a cross-sectional view of the first example of the manufacturing method;

5 FIG. 22 is a plan view of a second example of the manufacturing method;

FIG. 23 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XXIII-XXIII of FIG. 22;

10 FIG. 24 is a cross-sectional view of the second example of the manufacturing method;

FIG. 25 is a cross-sectional view of the second example of the manufacturing method;

15 FIG. 26 is a plan view of a third example of the manufacturing method;

FIG. 27 is a cross-sectional view of the third example of the manufacturing method;

FIG. 28 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XXIII-XXIII of FIG. 27;

20 FIG. 29 is a cross-sectional view of the third example of the manufacturing method;

FIG. 30 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XXX-XXX of FIG. 29;

25 FIG. 31 is a cross-sectional view of the third example of the manufacturing method;

FIG. 32 is a circuit diagram showing a circuit including a magnetoresistive element; and

FIG. 33 is a cross-sectional view of a memory cell example.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In general, according to one embodiment, a semiconductor device comprises: a MRAM chip including a semiconductor substrate and a memory cell array area comprising magnetoresistive elements which are provided on the semiconductor substrate; and a magnetic shield layer surrounding the memory cell array area in a circumferential direction of the MRAM chip, and having a closed magnetic path.

Embodiments will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

First Embodiment

45 FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing a first embodiment. FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along line II-II of FIG. 1. FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along line III-III of FIG. 1.

50 A semiconductor device according to the first embodiment comprises an MRAM chip 10 having a memory cell array area 13, and a magnetic shield layer 11 circumferentially surrounding the memory cell array area 13 of the MRAM chip 10 and providing a closed magnetic path. The MRAM chip 10 comprises a semiconductor substrate 12, on which the memory cell array area 13 is provided.

55 The memory cell array area 13 comprises a plurality of memory cells. Each memory cell comprises a magnetoresistive element MTJ. For instance, one memory cell comprises one magnetoresistive element MTJ. Further, one memory cell may include a diode (in the case of a cross point type memory cell array area), a selective transistor (in the case of a one transistor-one magnetoresistive element type memory cell array), etc.

65 The magnetoresistive element MTJ is an element configured to store data utilizing a magnetoresistive effect. The basic structure of the magnetoresistive element MTJ comprises a reference layer having a constant magnetism, a

memory layer having a variable magnetism, and a tunnel barrier layer between the reference layer and the memory layer.

The magnetoresistive element MTJ can assume a parallel state in which the residual magnetization direction of the memory layer is the same as that of the reference layer, or an anti-parallel state in which the residual magnetization direction of the memory layer is opposite to that of the reference layer.

For instance, the magnetoresistive element MTJ has a low resistance in the parallel state, and has a high resistance in the anti-parallel state. Namely, the magnetoresistive element MTJ can store the difference between these resistances as binary data.

In order to accurately write data to the magnetoresistive element MTJ, to accurately read data from the magnetoresistive element MTJ, and to store data in the magnetoresistive element MTJ for a long time, it is important to block external magnetic fields that will influence the magnetization of the magnetoresistive element MTJ.

In the above-mentioned structure, the magnetic shield layer 11 circumferentially surrounds the memory cell array area 13 of the MRAM chip 10. Namely, the magnetic shield layer 11 has a closed loop structure in a first cross section (see FIG. 2) that is perpendicular to the major surface of the semiconductor substrate 12 and is parallel to a circumferential direction. Accordingly, the magnetic shield layer 11 can prevent external magnetic fields from entering the MRAM chip 10.

As a result, the operations (writing, reading and data storage) of the MRAM chip 10 can be accurately performed without the influence of the external magnetic fields.

It is desirable that the magnetic shield layer 11 have a high magnetic permeability and a high saturated magnetization.

Materials for realizing this are, for example, Ni, Fe, Co, an Ni—Fe alloy, an Fe—Co alloy, and Fe₂O₄ containing Mn, Ni or Zn.

It is also desirable that the magnetic shield layer 11 have a thickness of 100 nm or more and 100 μm or less.

The magnetoresistive element MTJ is of a perpendicular magnetization type in which the element has magnetization perpendicular to the major surface of the semiconductor substrate 12, or of an in-plane magnetization type in which the element has magnetization parallel to the major surface of the semiconductor substrate 12.

The perpendicular magnetization type magnetoresistive element MTJ is easily influenced by an external magnetic field of the same magnetization direction as that of the memory layer, i.e., by an external magnetic field of a magnetization direction perpendicular to the major surface of the semiconductor substrate 12. Since, however, this external magnetic field is prevented from entering the MRAM chip 10 by the closed magnetic path of the magnetic shield layer 11, it does not influence the magnetization of the magnetoresistive elements MTJ in the memory cell array area 13.

On the other hand, the in-plane magnetization type magnetoresistive element MTJ is easily influenced by an external magnetic field of the same magnetization direction as that of the memory layer, i.e., by an external magnetic field of a magnetization direction parallel to the major surface of the semiconductor substrate 12. Since, however, this external magnetic field is prevented from entering the MRAM chip 10 by the magnetic shield layer 11 located on the upper and lower surfaces of the MRAM chip 10, it does not influence the magnetization of the magnetoresistive elements MTJ in the memory cell array area 13.

As described above, the semiconductor device of the first embodiment prevents external magnetic fields from entering the MRAM chip 10 to thereby stabilize the operations of the MRAM chip 10.

Second Embodiment

FIG. 4 is a perspective view showing a second embodiment. FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken along line V-V of FIG. 4. FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along line VI-VI of FIG. 4.

The semiconductor device of the second embodiment comprises an MRAM chip 10 having a memory cell array area 13, and a magnetic shield layer 11 circumferentially surrounding the memory cell array area 13 of the MRAM chip 10 and providing a closed magnetic path. The MRAM chip 10 comprises a semiconductor substrate 12, on which the memory cell array area 13 is provided.

The magnetic shield layer 11 has a closed loop structure in a first cross section (see FIG. 5) that is perpendicular to the major surface of the semiconductor substrate 12 and is parallel to a circumferential direction. Accordingly, the magnetic shield layer 11 can prevent external magnetic fields from entering the MRAM chip 10.

Further, the magnetic shield layer 11 has ends in a second cross section (see FIG. 6) perpendicular to the first cross section and parallel to the major surface of the semiconductor substrate 12. It is desirable to set the distance X between each end of the layer 11 and the MRAM chip 10 as long as possible.

In the second embodiment, the magnetic shield layer 11 is separate from the MRAM chip 10. However, it may be in contact with the MRAM chip 10.

The magnetoresistive elements MTJ employed in the second embodiment are similar to those of the first embodiment, and therefore will not be described. The relationship between the magnetoresistive element MTJ type (perpendicular magnetization/in-plane magnetization) and the external magnetic field is also similar to that in the first embodiment, and therefore will not be described.

By virtue of the above-described structure of the second embodiment, external magnetic fields can be prevented by the magnetic shield layer 11 from entering the MRAM chip 10. As a result, the operations (writing, reading and data storage) of the MRAM chip 10 can be reliably performed without the influence of the external magnetic fields.

Third Embodiment

FIG. 7 is a plan view of a third embodiment. FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view taken along line VIII-VIII of FIG. 7. FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view taken along line IX-IX of FIG. 7.

A semiconductor device according to the third embodiment comprises a printed board (e.g., an epoxy board) PB, an MRAM chip 10 provided on the circuit board PB and having a memory cell array area 13, a magnetic shield layer 11 circumferentially surrounding the memory cell array area 13 of the MRAM chip 10 and having a closed magnetic path, and a sealing member (formed of, for example, a resin) 17 covering the MRAM chip 10.

The MRAM chip 10 comprises a semiconductor substrate 12, and the memory cell array area 13 is located on the semiconductor substrate 12. The MRAM 10 also comprises pads 14. For instance, the pads 14 are connected to external terminals (e.g., solder balls) 18, provided on the reverse surface of the printed board PB, via bonding wires 15 and conductive lines 16 on the printed board PB.

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The semiconductor device of the third embodiment is characterized in that the MRAM chip **10** is packaged, and that no magnetic shield layer **11** is provided on the pads **14** of the MRAM chip **10**.

To prevent external magnetic fields from entering the MRAM chip, it is desirable that the magnetic shield layer **11** completely covers the MRAM chip **10** as shown in FIGS. 1 to 3. However, in general, the MRAM chip **10** has pads for realizing electrical connection with external elements. In this case, it is necessary to remove parts of the magnetic shield layer **11** located on the pads **14** of the MRAM chip **10**, as mentioned above.

In view of preventing erroneous operations of the MRAM chip **10** due to external magnetic fields, it is sufficient if the magnetic shield layer **11** at least circumferentially surrounds the memory cell array area **13**. This is because erroneous operations may well be caused by the influence of the external magnetic fields on the magnetization of the magnetoresistive elements MTJ in the memory cell array area **13**.

In view of the above, in the third embodiment, based on the structures shown in FIGS. 4 to 6, the magnetic shield layer **11** circumferentially surrounds at least the memory cell array area **13**. Namely, openings OP in the magnetic shield layer **11** are located near the edges of the MRAM chip **10** where no memory cell array area **13** exists.

In this case, the magnetic shield layer **11** has a closed loop structure in a first cross section (see FIG. 9) perpendicular to the major surface of the semiconductor substrate **12** and parallel to a circumferential direction. Accordingly, the magnetic shield layer **11** can prevent external magnetic fields from entering the memory cell array area **13** of the MRAM chip **10**.

Further, the magnetic shield layer **11** has ends in a second cross section (see FIG. 8) perpendicular to the first cross section and parallel to the major surface of the semiconductor substrate **12**. It is desirable to set the distance X between each end of the layer **11** and the MRAM chip **10** as long as possible.

The magnetoresistive elements MTJ employed in the third embodiment are similar to those of the first embodiment, and therefore will not be described. The relationship between the magnetoresistive element MTJ type (perpendicular magnetization/in-plane magnetization) and the external magnetic field is also similar to that in the first embodiment, and therefore will not be described.

Although it is assumed in the third embodiment that the sealing member **17** is formed of a resin, it may be a metal cap. Similarly, although it is assumed in the third embodiment that the external terminals **18** of the package are solder balls, they may be conductive pins (such as metal pillars).

By virtue of the above-described structure of the third embodiment, external magnetic fields can be prevented by the magnetic shield layer **11** from entering the memory cell array area **13** of the MRAM chip **10**. As a result, the operations (writing, reading and data storage) of the MRAM chip **10** can be reliably performed without the influence of the external magnetic fields.

Fourth Embodiment

FIG. 10 is a plan view of a fourth embodiment. FIG. 11 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XI-XI of FIG. 10. FIG. 12 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XII-XII of FIG. 10.

A semiconductor device according to the fourth embodiment is a modification of the semiconductor device of the third embodiment. The semiconductor device of the fourth embodiment differs from the semiconductor device of the third embodiment in that in the former, the magnetic shield

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layer **11** comprises a magnetic shield layer **11A** beforehand printed on the printed board PB, and a magnetic shield layer **11B** provided on the MRAM chip **10**.

These two magnetic shield layers **11A** and **11B** may be formed of the same material or different materials. Further, if a magnetic shield function is imparted to conductive layers **16** on the printed board PB, the conductive layers **16** and the magnetic shield layer **11A** can be formed of the same material. In this case, the conductive layers **16** and the magnetic shield layer **11A** can be simultaneously formed on the printed board PB, which contributes to manufacturing cost reduction.

The points in the fourth embodiment other than the above are similar to those in the third embodiment. Therefore, elements in FIGS. 10 to 12 similar to those in FIGS. 7 to 9 are denoted by corresponding reference numbers, and no detailed description is given thereof.

Fifth Embodiment

FIG. 13 is a plan view of a fifth embodiment. FIG. 14 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XIV-XIV of FIG. 13. FIG. 15 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XV-XV of FIG. 13.

A semiconductor device according to the fifth embodiment is a modification of the semiconductor device of the fourth embodiment. The semiconductor device of the fifth embodiment differs from the semiconductor device of the fourth embodiment in that in the former, a plurality of MRAM chips (in this embodiment, four MRAM chips) **10-1**, **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** are stacked on each other on the printed board PB.

The MRAM chips **10-1**, **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** comprise semiconductor substrates **12-1**, **12-2**, **12-3** and **12-4**, and memory cell array areas **13-1**, **13-2**, **13-3** and **13-4** on the semiconductor substrates, respectively.

The MRAM chips **10-1**, **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** are covered with magnetic shield layers **11B-1**, **11B-2**, **11B-3** and **11B-4**, respectively.

The MRAM chips **10-1**, **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** are electrically connected to each other by through vias **19** (such as through silicon vias (TSV)).

By thus installing a plurality of MRAM chips **10-1**, **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** in one package, increase in memory capacity and further cost reduction for each bit can be realized.

The points in the fifth embodiment other than the above are similar to those in the fourth embodiment. Therefore, elements in FIGS. 13 to 15 similar to those in FIGS. 10 to 12 are denoted by corresponding reference numbers, and no detailed description is given thereof.

Sixth Embodiment

FIG. 16 is a plan view of a sixth embodiment. FIG. 17 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XVII-XVII of FIG. 16. FIG. 18 is a cross-sectional view taken along line XVIII-XVIII of FIG. 16.

A semiconductor device according to the sixth embodiment is a modification of the semiconductor device of the fifth embodiment. The semiconductor device of the sixth embodiment differs from the semiconductor device of the fifth embodiment in that in the former, the plurality of MRAM chips **10-1**, **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** stacked on each other on the printed board PB are shifted from each other when viewed from above the package.

The MRAM chips **10-1**, **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** are shifted from each other so that pads **14** are electrically connected to conductive lines **16** by bonding wires **15**. Electrical connection using the bonding wires **15** is more advantageous than,

for example, electrical connection using through vias in the fifth embodiment, since the former can be realized at lower cost than the latter, which contributes to reduction of the manufacturing cost of the semiconductor device.

However, when the MRAM chips **10-1**, **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** are shifted from each other, parts of the lower surfaces of the MRAM chips **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4**, which are not covered with the magnetic shield layers **11B-2**, **11B-3** and **11B-4**, are exposed.

In light of this, the memory cell array areas **13-2**, **13-3** and **13-4** of the MRAM chips **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** are arranged so as not to overlap with regions Q that are not covered with the magnetic shield layers **11B-2**, **11B-3** and **11B-4**.

In this case, it is desirable that the distance Y between each region Q and the corresponding MRAM chip **10** be as long as possible.

In FIGS. **16** and **17**, the bonding wires **15** connected to the pads **14** of the MRAM chips **10-2**, **10-3** and **10-4** are connected to conductive lines (not shown) on the printed board PB, like the bonding wire **15** connected to the pad **14** of the MRAM chip **10-1**.

The points in the sixth embodiment other than the above are similar to those in the fifth embodiment. Therefore, elements in FIGS. **16** to **18** similar to those in FIGS. **13** to **15** are denoted by corresponding reference numbers, and no detailed description is given thereof.

(Manufacturing Method)

Method examples of manufacturing the magnetic shield layers of the first to sixth embodiments will now be described.

FIGS. **19** to **21** show a first manufacturing method example.

Firstly, as shown in FIGS. **19** and **20**, a seed layer (e.g., a metal layer) **11'** with a thickness of approx. several atoms is formed by nonelectrolytic plating to cover the MRAM chip **10**. The seed layer **11'** may be formed by bias deposition or sputtering, instead of nonelectrolytic plating.

Subsequently, a magnetic shield layer **11** is formed by nonelectrolytic plating to cover the seed layer **11'**. The magnetic shield layer **11** may be formed by, for example, sputtering, instead of nonelectrolytic plating. However, when the magnetic shield layer **11** is formed over the entire surface of the MRAM chip **10**, it is desirable to use nonelectrolytic plating that does not require fixing the MRAM chip **10** to a holder.

When the magnetic shield layer **11** is formed using nonelectrolytic plating, it is possible to form the magnetic shield layer **11** while etching the seed layer **11'**, by adjusting the pH of the electrolytic solution. In this case, in a final semiconductor device structure, all or part of the seed layer **11'** may not exist.

After that, as shown in FIG. **21**, parts of the seed layer **11'** and the magnetic shield layer **11** are eliminated to expose the pad **14** of the MRAM chip **10**.

FIGS. **22** to **25** show a second manufacturing method example.

Firstly, as shown in FIGS. **22** and **23**, a mask layer **20** is formed on the pad **14** of the MRAM chip **10**.

Subsequently, as shown in FIG. **24**, a seed layer (e.g., a metal layer) **11'** with a thickness of approx. several atoms is formed by nonelectrolytic plating to cover the MRAM chip **10**. The seed layer **11'** may be formed by bias deposition or sputtering, instead of nonelectrolytic plating. After that, a magnetic shield layer **11** is formed by nonelectrolytic plating to cover the seed layer **11'**. The magnetic shield layer **11** may be formed by, for example, sputtering, instead of nonelectrolytic plating.

In this example, the seed layer **11'** and the magnetic shield layer **11** are not formed in the region in which the mask layer **20** exists.

Thereafter, the mask layer **20** is eliminated to expose the pad **14** of the MRAM chip **10** as shown in FIG. **25**.

FIGS. **26** to **31** show a third manufacturing method example.

Firstly, as shown in FIG. **26**, a plurality of MRAM chips **10** are formed on a wafer **21**. At this time, the MRAM chips **10** are coupled to each other. After that, the wafer **21** is placed on a dicing tape **22**, and the MRAM chips **10** are separated from each other by dicing.

Subsequently, as shown in FIGS. **27** and **28**, the dicing tape **22** is expanded by a wafer expander, thereby widening the intervals between the MRAM chips **10** on the dicing tape **22**.

Thereafter, as shown in FIGS. **29** and **30**, a mask layer **20** is formed on the pad **14** of each MRAM chip **10**. Further, a magnetic shield layer **11** is formed on each MRAM chip **10**. The magnetic shield layer **11** can be formed by, for example, the method described in the above-mentioned first or second example. In this example, the magnetic shield layer **11** is not formed on the bottom of each MRAM chip **10** or on the mask layer **20**.

Subsequently, the pad **14** of each MRAM chip **10** is exposed by eliminating the mask layer **20**, as is shown in FIG. **31**.

Applied Example

A description will be given of a memory cell array area example in a MRAM chip.

FIG. **32** shows an example of an equivalent circuit in a memory cell array area.

A memory cell array **23** comprises a plurality of memory cells MC arranged in an array. Each memory cell includes one magnetoresistive element **10B** and one selective transistor (FET) SW.

The magnetoresistive element **10B** and the selective transistor SW are connected in series. An end of the series circuit is connected to a first bit line BL1, and the other end of the same is connected to a second bit line BL2. The control terminal (gate terminal) of the selective transistor SW is connected to a word line WL.

The first bit line BL1 extends in a first direction, and has its one end connected to a bit line driver/sinker **24**. The second bit line BL2 extends in a second direction, and has its one end connected to a bit line driver/sinker & read circuit **25**.

However, the circuit may be modified such that the first bit line BL1 is connected to the bit line driver/sinker & read circuit **25**, and the second bit line BL2 is connected to the bit line driver/sinker **24**.

Further, the positions of the bit line driver/sinker **24** and the bit line driver/sinker & read circuit **25** may be changed to each other, or be on the same side.

Each word line WL extends in the second direction and has its one end connected to a word line driver **26**.

FIG. **33** shows a memory cell example.

A selective transistor SW is located in an active area AA in a semiconductor substrate **27**. The active area AA is surrounded by an element isolating layer **28**. In this example, the element isolating layer **28** has a shallow trench isolation (STI) structure.

The selective transistor SW comprises source and drain diffusion layers **29a** and **29b** in the semiconductor substrate **27**, a gate insulation layer **30** placed on the channel between

the source and drain diffusion layers, and a gate electrode **31** on the gate insulation layer **30**. The gate electrode **31** functions as a word line WL.

An interlayer insulation layer **32** covers the selective transistor SW. The interlayer insulation layer **32** has a flat upper surface, on which a lower electrode **33** is provided. The lower electrode **33** is connected to the source/drain diffusion layer **29b** of the selective transistor SW via a contact plug **34**.

A magnetoresistive element **10B** is provided on the lower electrode **33**. An upper electrode **35** is provided on the magnetoresistive element **10B**. The upper electrode **35** functions as, for example, a hard mask when the magnetoresistive element **10B** is processed.

An interlayer insulation layer **36** is provided on the interlayer insulation layer **32** and covers the magnetoresistive element **10B**. The interlayer insulation layer **36** has a flat upper surface, on which the first and second bit lines BL1 and BL2 are provided. The first bit line BL1 is connected to the upper electrode **35**. The second bit line BL2 is connected to the source/drain diffusion layer **29a** of the selective transistor SW via a contact plug **37**.

This applied example is applicable to each of the above-described embodiments.

(Others)

Although the embodiments are directed to semiconductor devices provided with MRAM chips, the above-described basic idea is also applicable to other types of semiconductor chips (such as a CMOS sensor, an MEMS sensor and a magnetic sensor) in which a problem due to the influence of external magnetic fields may be raised.

CONCLUSION

The above embodiments can prevent external magnetic fields from entering the MRAM chips.

While certain embodiments have been described, these embodiments have been presented by way of example only, and are not intended to limit the scope of the inventions. Indeed, the novel embodiments described herein may be embodied in a variety of other forms; furthermore, various omissions, substitutions and changes in the form of the embodiments described herein may be made without departing from the spirit of the inventions. The accompanying claims and their equivalents are intended to cover such forms or modifications as would fall within the scope and spirit of the inventions.

What is claimed is:

1. A semiconductor device comprising:
 - a MRAM chip including a semiconductor substrate, and a memory cell array area comprising magnetoresistive elements which are provided on the semiconductor substrate;
 - a circuit board on which the MRAM chip is mounted;
 - a magnetic shield layer surrounding the memory cell array area in a circumferential direction of the MRAM chip, and having a closed magnetic path; and
 - wherein the magnetic shield layer comprises a first magnetic layer between a lower surface of the MRAM chip and the circuit board, and a second magnetic layer covering an upper surface and a side surface of the MRAM chip.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein the magnetic shield layer has an opening in which a pad of the MRAM chip is exposed.
3. The device of claim 2, wherein the second magnetic layer has an opening on the upper surface of the MRAM chip.
4. The device of claim 2, wherein the opening is adjacent to an end portion of the MRAM chip.

5. The device of claim 2, wherein the memory cell array area is provided further inside of the MRAM chip than the pad of the MRAM chip.

6. The device of claim 1, wherein the magnetic shield layer is provided outside of the MRAM chip.

7. The device of claim 1, wherein the first magnetic layer is in direct contact with the lower surface of the MRAM chip.

8. The device of claim 1, wherein the second magnetic layer is in direct contact with the upper surface and the side surface of the MRAM chip.

9. The device of claim 1, wherein the magnetic shield layer has a closed loop structure in a first cross section which is perpendicular to a surface of the semiconductor substrate and parallel to the circumferential direction;

wherein the magnetoresistive elements have magnetizations which are parallel to the first cross section;

wherein the magnetic shield layer has an end portion in a second cross section which is perpendicular to the first cross section and parallel to the surface of the semiconductor substrate; and

wherein the end portion of the magnetic shield layer is provided outside an end portion of the MRAM chip in the second cross section.

10. The device of claim 1, further comprising an upper chip on the MRAM chip, the upper chip including a semiconductor substrate and a memory cell array area comprising magnetoresistive elements,

wherein the magnetic shield layer comprises a third magnetic layer covering an upper surface and a side surface of the upper chip;

wherein a lower surface of the upper chip contacts the second magnetic layer; and

wherein the second magnetic layer has an end portion outside an end portion of the memory cell array area of the upper chip in a direction which is parallel to a surface of the semiconductor substrate.

11. A semiconductor device comprising:

an MRAM chip including a semiconductor substrate, and a memory cell array area comprising magnetoresistive elements which are provided on the semiconductor substrate;

a magnetic shield layer surrounding the memory cell array area in a circumferential direction of the MRAM chip, and having a closed magnetic path;

wherein the magnetic shield layer is provided outside of the MRAM chip and is in direct contact with an upper surface, a lower surface, and side surfaces of the MRAM chip; and

wherein the magnetic shield layer has an opening on the upper surface of the MRAM chip in which a pad of the MRAM chip is exposed.

12. The device of claim 11, wherein the opening is adjacent to an end portion of the MRAM chip.

13. The device of claim 11, wherein the memory cell array area is provided further inside of the MRAM chip than the pad of the MRAM chip.

14. The device of claim 11, further comprising a circuit board on which the MRAM chip is mounted.

15. The device of claim 14, wherein the magnetic shield layer comprises a first magnetic layer between a lower surface of the MRAM chip and the circuit board, and a second magnetic layer covering an upper surface and a side surface of the MRAM chip.

16. The device of claim 11, wherein the magnetic shield layer has a closed loop structure in a first cross section which is perpendicular to a surface of the semiconductor substrate and parallel to the circumferential direction;

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wherein the magnetoresistive elements have magnetizations which are parallel to the first cross section;
wherein the magnetic shield layer has an end portion in a second cross section which is perpendicular to the first cross section and parallel to the surface of the semiconductor substrate; and
wherein the end portion of the magnetic shield layer is provided outside an end portion of the MRAM chip in the second cross section.

17. The device of claim 15, further comprising an upper chip on the MRAM chip, the upper chip including a semiconductor substrate and a memory cell array area comprising magnetoresistive elements,

wherein the magnetic shield layer comprises a third magnetic layer covering an upper surface and a side surface of the upper chip;

wherein a lower surface of the upper chip contacts the second magnetic layer; and

wherein the second magnetic layer has an end portion outside an end portion of the memory cell array area of the upper chip in a direction which is parallel to a surface of the semiconductor substrate.

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